

CAR SHORTAGE PREDICTED.

Railroad Commissioner C. C. McCord's Letter of Advice.

Frankfort, Ky., June 24, 1907.
TERRY COAL & COKE CO.,
Hopkinsville, Ky.

GENTLEMEN:

Replying to your favor of the 14th instant, I unhesitatingly advise all consumers of coal to lay in a supply during the summer months and thereby avoid the inconvenience which must result on account of a shortage of cars next winter which in my opinion will be much more acute than was the shortage of last winter, unless the consumers lay in their coal supply as suggested.

You are at liberty to publish this in the interest of the producers and consumers of coal.

Yours Very Truly,
C. C. McCORD, Chairman,
R. R. Commission State of Ky.
The railroad and coal operating officials of Western Kentucky have given out the same official notice, and urge us to advise our stockholders, and customers to lay in their coal this summer.

Last winter's experience and high prices, together with the above timely information should be sufficient warning, and we trust our people will take advantage of it and act at once.

We are ready to supply you with coal in car load lots over either R. R. any day "the best coal at summer time prices," and trust that you will give us your orders early while we can get the cars to ship in.

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By RANDALL PARCISH. Author of
"When Wilderness Was King,"
"My Lady of the North," "His-
toric Illinois," Etc.

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(Continued From Last Issue.)

The troopers went at it as if they enjoyed the task, forcing their restive horses through the thickets, and roughly handling more than one who ventured to question their authority. Yet the work was over in less time than it takes to tell, the discomfited regulars driven pell-mell down the hill and back into the town, the eager cavalymen halting only at the command of the bugle. Brant, confident of his first sergeant in such emergency, merely paused long enough to watch the men deploy, and then pressed straight up the hill, alone and on foot. That danger to the besieged was yet imminent was very evident. The black spiral of smoke had become an enveloping cloud, spreading rapidly in both directions from its original starting-point. He arrived finally where the ground was charred black and covered with wood ashes, still hot under foot and smoking, but he pressed upward, sheltering his eyes with uplifted arm, and seeking passage where the scarcity of underbrush rendered the zone of fire less impassable. He could see scarcely three yards in advance, but to the rear the narrow lane of retreat remained open. Standing there, as though in the mouth of a furnace, the red flames scorching his face, Brant hollowed his hands for a call.

"Hampton!" The word rang out over the infernal crackling and roaring like the note of a trumpet.

"Ay! What is it?" The returning voice was plainly not Hampton's yet it came from directly in front, and not far away.

"Who are you? Is that you, Marshal?"

"That's the ticket," answered the voice, gruffly, "an' just as full o' fight as ever."

Brant lifted his jacket to protect his face from the scorching heat. There was certainly no time to lose in any exchange of compliments.

"I'm Brant, lieutenant Seventh cavalry," he cried, choking with the thickening smoke. "My troop has scattered those fellows who were hunting you. I'll protect you and your prisoner, but you'll have to get out of there at once. Can you locate me and make a dash for it? Wrap your coats around your heads, and leave your guns behind."

An instant he waited for the answer, fairly writhing in the intense heat, then Mason shouted, "Hampton's been shot, and I'm winged a little; I can't carry him."

Brant ripped off his jacket, wrapped it about his face, jammed a handkerchief into his mouth and with a prayer in his heart, leaped forward into the seemingly narrow fringe of fire in his front. Head down, he ran blindly, stumbling forward as he struck the ore-dump, and beating out with his hands the sparks that scorched his clothing. The smoke appeared to roll higher from the ground here, and the coughing soldier crept up beneath it, breathing the hot air, and feeling as though his entire body were afire. Mason, his countenance black and unrecognizable, his shirt soaked with blood, peered into his face.

"Hell, ain't it!" he sputtered, "but you're a dandy, all right."

"Is Hampton dead?"

"I reckon not. Got hit bad, though."

Brant cast one glance into the white, unconscious face of his rival, and acted with the promptness of military training.

"Whip off your shirt, Mason, and tie it around your face," he commanded. "Lively now!"

He bound his silk neckerchief across Hampton's mouth, and lifted the limp form partially from the



"I Read It in Your Face" He insisted, "It Told of Love."

ground. "Help me to get him up. There, that will do. Now keep as close as you can so as to steady him if I trip. Straight ahead--run for it!"

They sprang directly into the lurid flames, bending low, Brant's hands grasping the inert form lying across his shoulder. They dashed stumbling through the black, smouldering lane beyond. Halfway down this, the ground yet hot beneath their feet, the vapor stifling, but with clearer breaths of air blowing in their faces.

Brant tripped and fell. Mason bent out the smouldering sparks in his clothing, and assisted him to stagger to his feet once more. Then together they bore him slowly down below the first fire-line.

CHAPTER XXIII. The Door Closes.

Totally exhausted, the two men dropped their heavy burden on the earth. Mason swore as the blood began dripping again from his wound, which had been torn afresh in his efforts to bear Hampton to safety. Just below them a mounted trooper caught sight of them and came forward. He failed to recognize his officer in the begrimed person before him, until called to attention by the voice of command.

"Sims, if there is any water in your canteen, hand it over. Good; here, Marshal, use this. Now, Sims, note what I say carefully, and don't waste a minute. Tell the first sergeant to send a file of men up here with some sort of a litter, on the run. Then you ride to the Herndon house--the yellow house where the roads fork, you remember--and tell Miss Naida Gillis (don't forget the name) that Mr. Hampton has been seriously wounded, and we are taking him to the hotel. Can you remember that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then off with you, and don't spare the horse."

He was gone instantly, and Brant began bathing the pallid, upturned face.

"You'd better lie down, Marshal," he commanded. "You're pretty weak from loss of blood, and I can do all there is to be done until those fellows get here."

In 15 minutes they appeared, and five minutes later they were toiling slowly down to the valley, Brant walking beside his still unconscious rival. Here and there down the street, but especially about the steps of the Occidental, were gathered the discomfited vigilantes, busily discussing the affair, and cursing the watchful, silent guard. As these caught sight of the little party approaching there were shouts of derision. The sight and sound angered Brant.

"Carry Hampton to his room and summon medical attendance at once," he ordered. "I have a word to say to those fellows."

Seeing Mr. Wynkoop on the hotel porch, Brant said to him: "Miss Spencer informed me that you saw a man leap from the back window of the Occidental. Is that true?"

The missionary nodded.

"Good; then come along with me. I intend breaking the back of this lynching business right here and now."

He strode directly across the street to the steps of the Occidental, his clothing scarcely more than smoldering rags. The crowd stared at him sullenly; then suddenly a reaction came, and the American spirit of fair play, the frontier appreciation of bulldog courage, burst forth into a confused murmur, that became half a cheer. Brant did not mind these words.

"Now, look here, men! If you want any more trouble, we're here to accommodate you. Fighting is our trade, and we don't mind working at it. But I wish to tell you right now, and straight off the handle, that you are simply making a parcel of fools of yourselves. Slavin has been killed, and nine out of ten among you are secretly glad of it. He was a curse to this camp, but because some of his friends and cronies--thugs, gamblers and dive keepers--accuse Bob Hampton of having killed him, you start in blindly to lynch Hampton, never even waiting to find out whether the charge is the truth or a lie. You act like sheep, not American citizens. Now that we have pounded a little sense into some of you, perhaps you'll listen to the facts, and if you must hang some one, put your rope on the right man. Bob Hampton did not kill Red Slavin. The fellow who did kill him climbed out of the back window of the Occidental here, and got away, while you were chasing the wrong man. Mr. Wynkoop saw him, and so did your school teacher, Miss Spencer."

Then Wynkoop stepped gamely to the front. "All that is true, men. I have been trying ever since to tell you, but no one would listen. Miss Spencer and I both saw the man jump from the window; there was blood on his right arm and hand. He was a misshapen creature whom neither of us ever saw before, and he disappeared on a run up that ravine. I have no doubt he was Slavin's murderer."

"Now, you fellows, think that over," said Brant. "I intend to post a guard until I find out whether you are going to prove yourselves fools or men, but if we sail in again those of you who start the trouble can expect to get hurt, and pay for the piper. That's all."

(Continued in Next Issue.)

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